

Storm Lake gets remaining Vision Iowa dollars

Governor Tom Vilsack attended the Vision Iowa board's December meeting to announce the state's \$8 million investment in the city of Storm Lake, meaning the highly successful Vision Iowa program has allocated its last funds.

Since its creation in 2000, the approximately \$225 million program has assisted projects in Burlington, Cedar Falls/Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Ottumwa, Page County, Polk County and Sioux City. Storm Lake is the thirteenth recipient of Vision Iowa funds.

"The Vision Iowa program has leveraged far more development and created more opportunity in our state than we could have dreamed," Vilsack said. "A program that some people thought would assist only a few projects in large cities, Vision Iowa has invested in 13 projects in rural and urban areas across the state. I congratulate the forward-thinking leaders in each community who are making Iowa a better place to live, work and visit because of the projects they championed."

Storm Lake will receive the approximately \$5 million that remains in the Vision Iowa fund. An additional amount – not to exceed \$3.5 million – will come from the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) program. An component of Vision Iowa, CAT assists smaller initiatives.

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2005 Travel Guide is available

In a multi-faceted media relations effort, last month the Iowa Tourism Office released its *2005 Iowa Travel Guide*. Featuring 27 new attractions, 13 new bed and breakfast inns, 13 new hotels, eight new campgrounds and two new RV parks, the guide fills 176 pages. The latest edition of this award-winning travel planning tool is completely redesigned to reflect the Iowa Department of Economic Development's brand, IOWA *life* | changing.

Copies of the Guide are available at each of the state's welcome centers, by calling 800-345-Iowa or by visiting traveliowa.com. Industry partners may also request quantities of the guide by contacting Evelyn Davis at 888-472-6035 or evelyn.davis@iowalifechanging.com. ●



TFI legislative events are next month

The Travel Federation of Iowa's annual Legislative Showcase takes place February 15 at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. This annual event attracts a majority of Iowa lawmakers. A limited number of exhibit spaces are available to tourism-related organizations. To learn more about how you can be a part of this event, contact Michele Walker at 888-623-4232 or witr@traveliowa.org or Shirley Phillips at 712-662-7383 or setd@pionet.net.

Earlier in the day, everyone is invited to attend a legislative briefing in the auditorium of the Wallace Building, located just across the street from the state capitol. During this event, legislators will provide their thoughts on the 2005 legislative session. ●



Unity Day is April 29!

Mark your calendars for April 29, when the Iowa Tourism Office and the Travel Federation of Iowa will present Iowa Tourism Unity Day at the Hy-Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines.

2005 IOWA TOURISM LEADERSHIP AWARD NOMINATION GUIDELINES

The month of May is Iowa Tourism Month! The Iowa Tourism Office and the Travel Federation of Iowa will again recognize an outstanding individual who has shown exemplary leadership within the tourism industry and who has contributed significantly to enhancing Iowa's tourism industry. Up to two awards may be presented.

The award(s) will be presented April 29, 2005 at Iowa Tourism Unity Day in West Des Moines.

Nomination information should focus on "leadership" characteristics: an individual who positively influences others by their actions and who leads by example. The following questions must all be addressed in the nomination. Nominations must be typed or neatly printed on a maximum of two (2) 8 1/2 x 11" sheets of paper. The only additional attachments allowed are up to three individual letters of recommendation (optional). Applications must be submitted with original plus three (3) complete copies of all materials.

1. Name and full address of nominee:
2. Where does this nominee work or volunteer their time:
3. How long has nominee been in their current position:
4. How long has nominee been involved in the tourism industry:
4. Describe how this nominee is involved in local tourism activities:
6. Describe how this nominee is involved with their tourism region:
7. Describe how this nominee is involved with statewide tourism organizations:
8. Describe what makes this individual a leader:
9. Describe a special project or event coordinated by this nominee:
10. Describe any other areas of exemplary achievement outside of the normal job duties of this nominee:
11. Optional: Attach up to 3 (three) letters of recommendation in support of this nominee. Support letters are provided by:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
12. Name and telephone number of person completing this nomination form:

If you have any questions please phone Lonie Mezera at 1-888-472-6035. Send your completed nomination to: Iowa Tourism Office, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309, Attn: Leadership Award Nominations, or fax 515-242-4718. Nomination deadline is March 25, 2005. ●



Sponsored by the Meredith Travel Group and *Midwest Living*, the annual event will include a legislative update, the announcement of the 2006 cooperative advertising options, a buffet lunch and more. Iowa native Mary LoVerde will provide a keynote message about how to create a successful life balance. Registration information will arrive by mail later this month. Or go on line now to register at www.traveliowa.com/travel_industry/.

An annual highlight of Unity Day is the presentation of the Iowa Tourism Leadership Award. Please use the form provided to nominate a person you think is deserving of this honor. Nomination forms are also available in the Travel Industry section at traveliowa.com.

Officials from Storm Lake asked for \$9 million to assist the creation of Project Awaysis, a nearly \$30 million plan to create a “destination park” to improve the local quality of life by providing economic development and recreational opportunities. Major components of Project Awaysis include development of a Lakeshore Drive beach, lighthouse observation deck and concession stand, great lawn, family playground, indoor and outdoor aquatic center, The Cobblestone Lodge and condominiums. Renovations are also planned for the municipal golf course and Sunrise Campground.

In December, five additional projects received investments from CAT. A listing of those projects follows. To date, 157 initiatives have received more than \$50 million from CAT. About \$3.3 million remains in the program this fiscal year. The Vision Iowa board will meet again on February 8.

Grand Army of the Republic Historic Preservation Project, Redfield

Total project cost: \$41,500
Requested: \$20,750
Award: \$13,000

The Dallas County Conservation Board has plans to restore the Grand Army of the Republic building that was originally built as a meeting facility for the Sons of the Union Veterans. The restored building will be open to the public as a museum and as a meeting place. The first floor will house an 1880s post office and displays. The second floor will look as it did when the Sons of the Union Veterans met in the building.

Walking Park, Defiance

Total project cost: \$107,484
Requested: \$40,732
Award: \$35,000

This project is a walking park that will include a one-mile recreational trail, a shelter, parking, five camp sites, a butterfly garden, benches and landscaping. The park will be constructed on

approximately 8.1 acres of undeveloped city-owned property.

Henderson Community Center (Phase II) - Henderson

Total project cost: \$64,000
Requested: \$32,000
Received: \$20,000
grant

The Henderson Community Center was originally constructed in 2002, and houses a library, city hall, kitchen, community room and storage. Phase II of the project includes the addition of parking, landscaping, lighting, side-walks and a playground.

Heartland Acres Agribition Center, Independence

Total project cost: \$6,730,066
Requested: \$1.5 M
Award: \$750,000

This new 30,000-square-foot facility will include a visitors' center with a gift shop, a museum containing local artifacts, a collection of antique automobiles, a windmill and well, a replica 1800s barn with livestock and grain exhibits, a machine shed containing old and new farm equipment, and test or demonstration fields highlighting Iowa crops. The project also calls for the construction of a walking trail and picnic area.

Naturally Guttenberg, Guttenberg

Total project cost: \$2,035,567
Requested: \$1,014,882
Award: \$500,000

This project will build on the natural assets of the Mississippi River, the river bluffs and a coldwater spring. Project components include the construction of a marina with shoreline amenities, development of a Mississippi River/wetland interpretive trail, construction of bathroom facilities, restoration and enhancement of a historic roadside overlook and more. ●

Tourism Office gathering internship info

The Iowa Tourism Office is updating its database of tourism organizations that offer paid or unpaid internships in 2005. Once gathered, the information will be disseminated to various Iowa colleges and universities with travel and tourism programs.

Please contact Lonie Mezera at 888-472-6035 or lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com to request a form to submit your information. The deadline is February 4. ●

Two Iowa Welcome Centers close

As of December 31, the Iowa Welcome Centers at I-80 near Amana and in the Old Creamery Theater in Amana have closed. Please do not send your literature to these two facilities. ●

Iowans head to Kansas City for annual showcase

For the third consecutive year, members of the Iowa tourism industry will hit the road to promote the state as a destination for packaged travel. This year, Kansas City is the site the annual PlanIt Iowa Showcase, which brings together Iowans and group travel planners from the Kansas City area. In a trade show fashion, the event enables the two groups to exchange information and foster long-term relationships. In addition, exhibitors may attend a complimentary event called "Meet the Media," a town meeting-style discussion with Parkville, Missouri-based freelance writer Diana Lambdin Meyer and *Kansas City Star* Travel Editor Alan Holder.

To learn more about PlanIt Iowa, contact Mark Eckman at 888-472-6035 or mark.eckman@iowalifechanging.com. To get details about Meet the Media, contact Shawna Lode at 888-472-6035 or shawna.lode@iowalifechanging.com. ●



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from all of us at
the Iowa Tourism Office!